

Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Opportunity to Provide Comments on the Proposed Three Meadows Restoration Project, Amador County

The Amador Resource Conservation District (ARCD) is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency for the Three Meadows Restoration Project (Project). A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), describing potential adverse environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures, has been prepared by the ARCD in connection with this project. This notice is intended to provide interested individuals, organizations, and agencies the opportunity to comment on the environmental effects of the Project as described in the MND.

Project Location

The Project encompasses three relatively small, high elevation meadows in the N. F. Mokelumne River watershed in Amador County, California on lands administered by the USDA Forest Service, Amador Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest. The three meadows include Upper Onion Valley (elevation 7,480 feet, 27 acres), High Onion Meadow (elevation 8,000 feet, 10 acres), and Tyler Meadow (elevation 6,800 feet, 10 acres), which are located 45 miles east of Jackson, California, and five miles south of State Highway 88, in the vicinity of the Upper Bear River Reservoir (T8N, R16E, Sections 1, 3, and 11).

Project Description

The purpose of the Project is to restore the natural morphology of three relatively small, high elevation meadows in Amador County, California. The would improve hydrologic functions of the meadow systems by improving water quality, timing of flows, recovery of sediment deposition, and arrest channel head cutting.

To achieve the above restoration goals, each of the three meadows has its own management action plan to resolve specific resource concerns.

- Construction of log weirs and constructed rock riffles within existing incised channels to raise base level of channel, encourage aggradation, reduce overall channel capacity and raise the groundwater table. This includes 11 at Tyler Meadow, 25 at Upper Onion Valley, and 26 at High Onion. Logs will be felled from suitable trees located along the meadow edge, along temporary access routes or from within the meadows. Trees used for log weirs will be hand felled, bucked, and limbed. Transport from the harvest location to the weir construction will utilize various construction equipment. Log weirs will be installed by hand crews. There will be 21 rock riffles along Onion Creek and two tributaries within Upper Onion Valley. It is expected that rock for the riffles will be imported from the Tragedy Pit. Construction of rock riffles will be completed using motorized equipment in the meadow in designated areas.
- Rock will be placed within 90 lf / 720 sq. ft. of perennial streams and 0.01 acre of adjacent wet meadow at the outflow from Upper Onion Valley. Rock will likely be imported from Tragedy Pit for this component. Motorized equipment would be used in order to accomplish this action item in designated areas.

- A 5:1 sloped rock berm will be placed along FS Road 08N03 to direct stream flow to original channel and into meadow.
- Exclusionary cattle fencing will be placed around six (6) hillslope seeps to protect existing hydrology and prevent soil compaction.
- OHV exclusion fencing consisting of log or rock barriers will be placed along the upper edge of Tyler Meadow to prevent OHV access from adjacent roadway.
- Access to the meadow restoration areas will be via temporary forest access routes (approx. 3,875 lf / 1.3 acres) and meadow access routes (1,170 lf / 0.40 ac) to be restored upon project completion.

Material Sourcing

The primary materials needed for the construction of the restoration project are logs for the log weirs and the stream bed material for the constructed riffles and roughened channels. Logs will be sourced from areas within the meadow (primarily lodgepole) and from within the forest access routes. The streambed material is expected to be sourced from other Forest Service rock staging areas on the district. Rock transported to the site would be delivered to the designated staging areas and mixed on site to achieve the desired gradation for either the constructed riffles or the roughened channel.

Revegetation

The Project will require areas of revegetation. Prior to final demobilization, access routes will be restored. Access routes through the meadow are expected to have residual sod, and thus not require seeding, but may receive mulching and possibly seed as determined necessary by the ENF Botanist. Willow stakes will be planted next to stream channels and disturbed areas following construction to reduce immediate post project vulnerability to erosion. During the spring and summer following project completion, locally collected seeds would be dispersed along access roads, borrow sites, and other heavily disturbed areas as needed.

Forest access routes are to be ripped, seeded with native species approved by the ENF Botanist, and covered with coarse woody debris (eg. logs and slash). Unutilized limbs, tops, and rounds will be lopped and scattered along the designated access routes to a depth not to exceed 30" following completion of restoration activities to stabilize disturbed soils. Unutilized woody material may also be lopped and scattered within the Project area to a depth not to exceed 30".

Regulatory Process

Project implementation will require the Water Board to take regulatory action on the issuance of a Water Quality Certification pursuant to Clean Water Act section 401. This notice serves as a notice of intent to adopt a MND for this project pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines section 15072.

Comment Deadline and How to Submit Comments

Please submit your comments on the MND via email to: amanda@amadorRCD.org with the subject line: "Three Meadows Restoration Project" no later than close of business on April 30, 2020.

A copy of the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration can be downloaded at the following:

www.AmadorRCD.org

To request a compact disc or hard copy of the MND, please call Amador Resource Conservation District, Attn: Amanda Watson at 916-562-0204 or amanda@amadorRCD.org.